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For information: Karen Guarino, Communications Director
(585) 272-7890

Monroe County Receives World of Difference Award and Monroe County Medical Examiner's Office Receives Certificate of Caring for Support of Eye and Tissue Donation

Rochester, NY -- July 7, 2004 -- The County of Monroe received a *World of Difference Award* from the Rochester Eye & Tissue Bank (RETB) on June 14 at the agency's *Celebration of Caring* reception held at Geva Theatre, Rochester, NY. Also, the Monroe County Medical Examiner's Office received a *Certificate of Caring*. Nearly 300 people attended the *Celebration of Caring* to honor those who have given the *Gift of Life and Sight in 2003*, their families, and others who support organ and tissue donation.

Both the County of Monroe and the Medical Examiner's Office were recognized for supporting eye and tissue donation in the community, allowing the RETB to lease operating room space within the offices of the Medical Examiner since 1993. "This opportunity provided to us by Monroe County has enabled us to carry out the wishes of hundreds of local donor families and provide tissue to thousands of local recipients in need of these sometimes life-saving tissues," says Linda Fraser, RETB executive director. In the last four years, RETB has recovered tissue from 203 tissue donors at the Medical Examiner's Office. These donors provided 102 heart valves, 36 veins for bypass surgeries, musculoskeletal tissue for 5,550 procedures and skin for 340 patients in need. Dr. Thomas Smith, chief medical examiner, accepted the award on behalf of County Executive Maggie Brooks, and the certificate on behalf of the Medical Examiner's Office.

A *Celebration of Caring* reception is RETB's way to express appreciation to those who help the agency provide tissues for transplant, medical education and research, and to acknowledge those individuals involved in the donation process.

The RETB, founded in 1952, is a nonprofit agency that provides ocular, musculoskeletal, skin and cardiovascular tissues for transplant, medical education and research. The agency serves the Finger Lakes Region as well as North Central PA.

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